# THE MOTTLED BUTTERFLY

*Jonquelle's Clever Solution of a Jewel Theft.*

**By Melville Davisson Post**

THE opera had opened. The music began to fill the corridors. But M. Jonquelle did not go in. He remained idling in the foyer, a cigarette in his fingers, his manner and air a well-bred, bored indifference. The whole house was crowded. There was not a vacant seat. It was the last performance in Paris of Mme. Zirtenzoff's "Salome." A few belated persons passed M. Jonquelle and entered the doors to the boxes. Some of these persons addressed him—all regarded him. He was a well known figure in Paris. His friendship was worth something and whether one knew him, or cared to know him, all were curious about the man.

The vast music assembled and extended itself.

The foyer became empty and still M. Jonquelle did not go in. Perhaps it was because Mme. Zirtenzoff had not gone on. She was a famous beauty; her Salome had the abandon which stimulated even the jaded nerves of France. It had been on at the opera for fifty days and Paris was still keen to see it.

The woman was a Russian exotic, one of those alluring creatures that always assemble a fabulous legend. There was a wild passion in her Salome, and her conquests were the gossip of Paris.

The opera had continued for perhaps thirty minutes. Mme. Zirtenzoff had come on; her voice, like a silver bell, reached M. Jonquelle clearly where he sauntered in the foyer.

Presently the door to a box opened and one of the pages of the theater appeared with an immense bouquet of orchids. The flowers were worth 1,000 francs. They could have been grown in Paris only with extreme care and under every perfection of light and temperature. It was a mass of flowers that would have drawn the attention of anybody, exquisite orchids of the genus Oncidium Kramerii, called the mottled butterfly.

It seemed to have drawn the attention of M. Jonquelle. He stopped the page as he passed him.

"Garcon," he said, handing him a piece of gold, "find me a box of cigarettes before you go on with those flowers. Quickly—run; I will hold them until you return."

The boy knew the great chief of the service de la surete. For a moment he was uncertain what to do; he had been sent to deliver these flowers to Mme. Zirtenzoff. There was a generous gratuity behind the direction, but it was not more than M. Jonquelle's gold piece, and, besides, one does not disobey the prefect of police of Paris.

He gave M. Jonquelle the bouquet of orchids and disappeared down the stairway. He was gone hardly a moment. When he returned M. Jonquelle had not moved from his position by a pillar of the foyer. He handed back the orchids to the page and received the box of cigarettes.

He paused a moment, fingered the box, but did not open it. Instead he walked a few steps down the foyer and entered the box from which the page had come out with the orchids.

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ONE looking on would have wondered why the prefect of police required a pack of cigarettes, at the cost of a ten-franc gold-piece—especially as, after having turned it in his hand, he had put it carelessly into his pocket and entered a box.

It would appear that he waited for these cigarettes before entering the box. But to what end? One could not smoke in a box at the opera, at its most expensive point in the ultra-fashionable audience of Paris.

Although the great opera house was packed with people—not a vacant seat visible to the eye—there was but one person in the box which M. Jonquelle had entered.

He was a person that any one would pause almost anywhere to observe. He was young; was exquisitely dressed—a dress in which there was some of the overextravagance of detail, that suggestion of elegance which the Parisian cannot avoid. The severity of the English tailor he must always modify; he must be permitted to add a jewel, a bracelet—some feminine touch.

He was extremely handsome, a blond French type, with a dainty mustache and regular Italian features, and thick, soft, yellow hair presenting the gloss of the seal's coat. In his physical aspect, for perfection of detail, the man had no equal on the Paris boulevards.

It had got him a rich American wife and lifted him, as by a fairy lamp, out of the sordid environments of an old family in decay. The thing seemed a piece of the design of a Providence, with an esthetic sense.

This exquisite person would have been incongruous except in an atmosphere of wealth. He had an apartment now beyond the Arc de Triompha, one of those wonderful apartments that the American invasion after the great war had set up in Paris.

The marquis was the envy of the boulevardier. But it was rumored that he had not the freedom of his wife's moneysacks. He got what she allowed him, but it ought to be written here, in justice to the marquis, that it was not he who complained. Why should he? The allowance was evidently enough for any resonable man. He had the best of everything. If he felt any sense of stint, there was no sign either by word or act.

In form the marquis was above reproach. There could be no surprise to the fashionable audience of Paris in the fact that the marquis was alone in the box. His wife was on a visit to America, and it was better fitting that the marquis should be alone than to be with another who might console him for his wife's absence. If the marquis was not the best of men, he was at any rate, not the least discreet.

He rose and bowed when the prefect entered.

"Ah, monsieur," he said, "I am charmed to see you. Mme. Zirtenzoff will be even worth an hour of the priceless time of the prefect of Paris. I shall be honored to have you as guest. Pray sit down."

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M. JONQUELLE sat down. He looked a moment over the vast audience, brilliant and distinguished; a moment at Mme. Zirtenzoff on the distant stage, and then he addressed his host.

"Monsieur," he said, "Mme. Zirtenzoff is, I imagine, beyond rubies. But I have not come here to observe her; I have come to ask you about the robbery in your apartment. That was an extraordinary robbery."

"It was most extraordinary, monsieur," replied the marquis. "The whole of Paris regretted that you were out of France at the time. Where were you, monsieur?"

Then the marquis added with a laugh:

"You cannot be expected to tell that; you protect us, monsieur, by your mystery. If the Lecca could say, 'Tomorrow M. Jonquelle will be in Brussels,' we should not have a jewel or a five-franc piece remaining to us."

"Alas, monsieur," replied the prefect, "you do me too much honor. There are a number of very good men with the service de la surete, quite as capable as I to protect Paris."

"The marquis laughed.

"You have an affection for your associates, M. Jonquelle, that I fear clouds your intelligence. Nothing could have been managed with more stupidity than the investigation of my apartment. In your absence, monsieur, you cannot imagine into what hopeless commonplace the investigation of a criminal affair in Paris can descend.

"Alas, monsieur, there is a gulf fixed between Alexander and the lieutenants of Alexander! But for my own feeble efforts, nothing would have resulted from the police investigation in my apartment. The necklace of diamonds which the marquise purchased for five hundred thousand francs, assembled from the crown jewels of Russia, would have disappeared without a clue to the thief. As it happened, he was brought to justice. He confessed and was sentenced for an incredible period by the court. But for me"—and again the marquis laughed—"there would have been no thief sentenced. Your inspectors, monsieur, were ridiculous."

There was humility in the prefect's reply.

"And the Marquis Chantelle was magnificent! His fame in the affair has reached me; he is the admiration of the surette! I have come, monsieur, to verify the details, and from yourself. I do not know what rumor may have added or omitted."

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HE bowed slightly, like one who would add a gesture of compliment to his words.

"Willingly, monsieur," replied the marquis. "I shall be charmed to verify details; but you will pardon me if I am moved to ask you for your opinion on a certain phase of this mystery. You must have an opinion, monsieur, if you do not have an explanatin, in fact."

He turned a little in his seat.

"Monsieur," he said, "how did it happen that when we had fixed this robbery upon Jean Lequex, a member of the Lecca, he admitted it before the court and asked for an immediate sentence? But he would admit nothing else; he would not say what he had done with the necklace or where it was.

"That was a strange position for a man to take, monsieur. He could hope nothing from the judge. Why confess? It did not lighten his sentence; and after all, our evidence against him was circumstantial. Why did he not say what he had done with the necklace? The judge would have reduced the sentence. Why conceal it, monsieur, and go for this long period of servitude? Did he hope to escape?"

M. Jonquelle spoke with decision.

"He did not."

"Then, monsieur," continued the marquis, "why did he refuse to say where the necklace was? Of what service would be the necklace to him after twenty years?"

Again M. Jonquelle replied directly and with decision.

"Of no use, monsieur; the man did not expect it to be of any use to him."

"Then, monsieur," continued the marquis, "why in the name of heaven did he not say where this necklace was, and thereby reduce his sentence?"

M, Jonquelle seemed to reflect.

"You have asked for my opinion," he said; "I think I can do better than give an opinion. I think I can tell you precisely the reason why Jean Lequex, when he confessed this crime before the court, refused to say what had become of the necklace."

He smiled.

"But I must be permitted, monsieur, to hold this explanation as a sort of wage against the details of your story. The service de la surette is filled with admiration for you. You must omit no item of the narrative. Ah, how enchanting Mme. Zirtenzoff is! Hair like a sunburst of dreams and the figure of a dryad! One would do murder for her."

The marquis laughed.

"Murder, monsieur?"

"Ah, yes," replied the prefect, "murder or any lesser crime."

He lifted his eyebrows in a vague facetious expression. His sleek, ironical voice went into a sort of singsing.

"We have read in the poets of old time, and our fathers have told us, that the first kiss of the first woman we love is beyond all kisses the sweetest. And true it is, I find. But quite as true it is, I find, that equally sweet is the last kiss of the last woman we love.

"I do not know whence I have that quotation, marquis, but in its criminal phase the thing is as sure as the dawn. If for the first kiss of the first woman we love one would do a murder, would one do a lesser thing for the last kiss of the last woman he loves?"

The marquis regarded the face of the prefect a moment in a sort of wonder.

"Monsieur," he said, "the human heart is always young."

"In the young," replied M. Jonquelle, "it is at least always the human heart. When a man is old he takes his hazard for power, but when he is young——"

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THE marquis looked the prefect frankly in the face. "You believe this robbery could have been committed for a woman?"

"For whom other could jewels be intended?" replied Jonquelle.

The marquis continued to regard the prefect with a certain interest.

"You mean," he said, "that the reason why the Apache, Jean Lequex, did not tell what he had done with the necklace was, in fact, because he had given it to a woman?"

The prefect of police looked at the marquis with some concern, with, in fact, a certain element of wonder.

"Why, no, monsieur; that is not the reason at all."

The marquis seemed puzzled.

"Do you generalize, then, to no definite purpose?"

"By no means," replied the prefect of police. "I would generalize to the solution of this mystery, and with M. le Marquis' aid I think we can arrive at it."

"Monsieur," replied the marquis coldly, "I believe the mystery has already been concluded. I believe its solution seems complete."

"'Seems,'" repeated the prefect of police, "is the word precisely. While it is true that the criminal, Jean Lequex, has confessed before the court and been sentenced to a term of years for the robbery of these jewels, the jewels remain to be discovered."

He paused and regarded the marquis with an expression of compliment.

"We feel, at the Service de la Surete, that if we could bring to the remaining feature of this matter the same degree of excellent acumen that was brought to its initial stages by the Marquis de Chantelle we should be able to restore the necklace to the marquise upon her return from America. She returns tomorrow, does she not? It seems a brief time for so difficult an undertaking."

M. Jonquelle smiled.

"I regret to intrude upon your pleasure, marquis, and especially on this, the final night of Mme. Zirtenzoff's triumph — amazing woman, adorable woman! One should lose no moment of her excellence."

He paused.

"But, monsieur, I cannot adequately admire your excellent handling of this matter unless I am quite certain that I have the details of it correctly. Permit me, monsieur, to repeat these details, and correct me, I beg of you, if I should present them with an item of inaccuracy. I was absent and I have only the memory of inferiors."

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THE prefect of police rested his arm on the seat of the box, while the marquis fingered his monocle idly, twisting the silk cord. He assumed an attitude of careless attention and M. Jonquelle went on:

"On the night of the 18th of February M. le Marquis, opening the door of his apartment at a late hour, saw a slip of paper beside the door. At the moment the marquis gave this item no attention; it did not impress him. It was late, the servants having retired, and the marquis withdrew to his bedroom alone. It appears, however, that digressions of the mind occur to all of us, even to the Marquis de Chantelle, on the border of dreamland. It occurred to him that this slip of paper was a memorandum by the concierge to call the attention of the marquis upon his arrival to some inquiry that had been made for him. The marquis, however, did not arise at that hour to verify this impression, but in the morning when he awoke he remembered it and, going into the drawing room in his dressing gown and slippers—it was before the arrival of his valet—he found the slip of paper where it had remained as though it had been slipped under the door.

"The marquis was surprised when he came to examine this bit of paper. It contained some numbers written with a pencil, and the words in a strained, unformed hand: 'The combination of the safe of the Marquis Chantelle.' Monsieur turned at once to the small safe which is built into the wall of the apartment after the American fashion. He tried the combination written on the slip of paper, found it correct, opened the safe and discovered that the necklace had disappeared."

The prefect of police hesitated in the narrative and addressed an inquiry.

"It is true, monsieur," he said, "that you did not know the combination of this safe, that the combination was known only to your wife, the marquise, and that more than once, for example at the Cafe Anglais on the 14th of December, at midnight, when any creature from the underworld of Paris might have been present, you spoke of the danger of keeping this necklace in a small private safe in the apartment when it should be deposited with a banker? But to these objections the marquise always returned the same answer—that she alone had the combination of the safe? This is true?"

"It is true," replied the marquis. "But it was not discreet, as afterevents have demonstrated. Perhaps by these discussions we gave information of the whereabouts of this necklace to the Apache Lequex."

The prefect of police made a vague gesture and continued to speak.

"The marquis, upon discovery of the robbery, at once notified the service de la surete. Old Forneau and an agent arrived immediately. Upon examination of the bit of paper, it proved to be a slip bearing the name in print of Moore, Poole & Co., a firm of American brokers in Paris.

"Old Forneau at once suggested that the robbery must have been committed by some one from the office of these brokers, probably an American, since the slip of paper must have come from some one employed in that establishment. But here the Marquis Chantelle, showing an intelligence superior to that of this officer of the surete, pointed out that no one would come on such an adventure bringing with him a piece of paper, and especially an indicatory piece of paper, upon which to set down such a memorandum. It was far more likely that the piece of paper had been acquired somewhere in the apartment.

"He then suggested that an inquiry be made to discover whether some one from this American firm of Moore, Poole & Co. had not at one time occupied an apartment in the building. Forneau acted upon this suggestion and ascertained that monsieur the marquis was correct. He discovered a quantity of these blank printed slips in the basement of the building, where, with other rubbish, they had been retained by the concierge to kindle fire in the furnace. Thus monsieur the marquis at one stroke removed any suspicion that might have been attached to this firm of brokers and confirmed the inquiry to some one having access to the building and knowledge of it, else he would not have been in the basement where this debris from the apartments of old tenants had accumulated.

"The query as to how the robber had obtained access to the marquis' apartment on this night now advanced itself. There is no key to these apartments except the one delivered to the tenant by the bank making the lease; and when the door is closed, it is locked from the outside—that is to say, the knob of the door does not turn on the outside. It turns only on the inside, so that it can always be opened from the inside, whether locked or not. It cannot be opened from the outside because the handle of the doorknob, as I have said, does not turn. How, then, would this robber enter the marquis' apartment? Again the marquis was able to give Forneau an explanation.

"On the evening of the robbery it was his intention to remain in his apartment. He had dismissed his valet and the servants and was alone. Later he changed his mind and concluded to go out. Upon reflection he remembered that he did not entirely close the door; but it was a thing which did not at the moment impress him. It was his habit always, of course, to close the door, and he had closed it, but upon returning for a glove he had left the door ajar. This he was afterward able to establish because of a trivial incident. He remembered the glitter of the electric light on the point of a gold frame at the corner of the drawing-room table. It caught his eye as he descended the steps. But it did not impress him with the fact that he had neglected entirely to close the door. It impressed him merely as an incident which he afterward remembered, and he continued to descend.

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"IT now occurred to Forneau that this robbery had been committed by some one of the hotel thieves of Paris, who were accustomed to enter any building which they were able to get into and to search any apartment that they happened to find open. But the marquis reminded Forneau that the person committing this robbery had brought with him a piece of paper from the basement; that mere thieves entering on the chance of finding some valuables would not have taken this precaution. Forneau recognized the wisdom of this suggestion and he inquired of the marquis upon what theory the investigation would proceed.

"The marquis now pointed out that this robbery must have been committed by some one familiar with the building, some one who knew the habits of the tenants and was in a position to await a favorable opportunity; otherwise he could not have taken advantage of this one occasion on which the door to the marquis' apartment happened not to be closed. This theory pleased Forneau and he adopted every excellent suggestion which the marquis was able to make. But he ventured to wonder from what source the thief had been able to obtain the combination to the safe, since it was known only to madame the marquise. The marquis was again able to indicate a valuable suggestion. Women, he ventured to suggest, had always the same habits. They did not trust their memories for anything that required an accuracy of numbers. The marquise would have somewhere this memorandum written down. He suggested that Forneau make a search of her writing table.

"To their surprise, they found the lock to the drawers of this table broken, and among some papers hastily turned over, at the back of one of these drawers, a small book with a red leather cover. On the last page, in pencil, was precisely the same memorandum which the marquis had picked up on the slip of paper under the door—'the combination to the safe of the Marquise de Chantelle'—and following the four columns of four figures.

"It was now clear that the robbery had been committed as the marquis had suggested—by some one in the building who had the leisure to watch and who was familiar with the habits of the tenants. It was not certain, of course, that this persol would know that the necklace was in the safe, but he would be convinced that the safe held some objects of value.

"The problem which now presented itself was to discover what employe in the building could have written this memorandum. Forneau and the marquis had before them the handwriting. With the histories and associates of the valet, the concierge and the older employes they were familiar and were convinced that it was not one of these persons; but there were other employes in this apartment and the problem was how to obtain specimens of their handwriting without incurring suspicion. In his perplexity Forneau asked the opinion of the Marquis de Chantelle.

"'The marquis suggested the following clever device: The service de la surete should send an agent to the building, pretending to be an official of the government concerned with certain mental tests required in order to register citizens for the electorate. Among other tests, he should require them to write the name of the president of France and that of the premier at the close of the war. This would include the names of Millerand and Clemenceau, and by this means they could obtain the M of the word Marquis and the C of the word Chantelle, which had been written by the unknown thief upon the memorandum which contained the combination of the safe."

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THE prefect of police stopped. The attention of the Marquis de Chantelle seemed to have passed from the narrative to a contemplation of the opera.

Mme. Zirtensoff was at the point of her greatest scene. Her voice filled the immense house like a silver bell—like innumerable silver bells—a quality of the human voice that no other diva had ever brought to Paris. Her youth, her alluring beauty, added to the enchantment.

M. le Marquis de Chantelle was looking at her, one hand fingering his mustache, the other turning the monocle at the end of the silk cord. The prefect of police did not interrupt the absorption, but he continued to speak.

"And as it happened," he said, "it was the ingenuity of this device suggested by the Marquis de Chantelle that enabled Forneau to locate the one who had committed the robbery. He found an employe lately taken on by the concierge because he offered to assist in cleaning the building at a lower cost. The agent from the service de la surete came to this person in the course of his interviews with the employes of the building.

"'Monsieur,' he said, 'I am compelled to ask you to submit to some mental tests, but I will make them brief. Tell me the form of government under which we live and write down for me the name of the president of France and that of the premier who conducted the peace terms in the great war and I will give you no further annoyance.'

"The man replied that France was a republic and wrote the name of Alexandre Millerand, but when he came to write the C in Clemenceau he hesitated. The agent seized him at once, snapped a pair of handcuffs on him and confronted him with Forneau. He was shown the slip of paper which the marquis had picked up in his apartment. He was told the details of the crime as he had carried it out and in his confusion he confessed."

The prefect of police continued to speak slowly, without a change of accent, as if to himself.

"The marquis was astonished when Forneau brought the confessed thief before him. Like the usual amateur, he could not realize that his methods had succeeded. He could not believe that he had been so brilliantly correct in his deductions. He was amazed. He sought to test now every item upon which he had depended, to present its weakness, its doubt; and when he found the results inevitable he washed his hands of the affair."

The prefect introduced a comment without interrupting the monotony of his discourse.

"It was the tender, the considerate heart. The solution of a criminal mystery is a problem, but the criminal is a man to suffer!"

He went on:

"Monsieur the Marquis will remember the Apache's confession. He had obtained a position in the building and had watched the marquis' apartment. As it happened, the night of the robbery was not the first time that the marquis had left the door unclosed. A week before he had left it unclosed in the afternoon. It was then that this man had gone in, taking with him a slip of paper from the basement, broke open the marquise's desk and searched for the combination, which he finally found and wrote down. The search had required a very long time and he had not time on this day to open the safe. He had taken the paper with him and waited until this night on which the marquis had again gone out, leaving the door unlatched. Then he had opened the safe and removed the necklace. He thought that in putting the necklace into his pocket he must have pulled the slip of paper out and by this means it had fallen to the floor, where the marquis had picked it up.

"The man made no defense and waived all legal procedure. He confessed and has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment. But he refused to say what he had done with the necklace."

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M. JONQUELLE closed his narrative. For some minutes he had been speaking in a casual voice as to a person who did not listen; and, in fact, the Marquis de Chantelle had ceased to listen. He was entirely occupied with Mme. Zirtensoff, with her divine voice in the fairyland of the magnificent stage setting.

There was a moment of suspense.

She was about to dance before Herod, her body proportioned like a dryad's, supple in the nearly naked costume of the east, commanding the exclusive attention of the whole of Paris packed in the opera house.

The Marquis de Chantelle, oblivious of M. Jonquelle, was awaiting the presentation of his bouquet of oriental orchids. They should arrive at this moment.

He watched to see what sign Mme. Zirtenzoff would give him before she swayed into the dance that had entranced Herod.

M. Jonquelle, watching the marquis, took a box of cigarettes out of his pocket and slipped his thumb nail around the stamp, but he did not open the box. He spoke suddenly to the Marquis de Chantelle. His voice was sharp, clear, and its tones arrested the man's attention.

"Monsieur le Marquis," he said, "Mme. Zirtenzoff will not be pleased with her bouquet of orchids."

The marquis turned suddenly on him. His eyes were now contracted with an intense expression.

"You know, monsieur, that I have sent a bouquet of orchids to Mme. Zirtenzoff?"

"Surely, monsieur," replied the prefect of police. "I passed the boy departing with them when I entered. They were very lovely, superb, exquisite, the mottled butterfly! How aptly adapted is that flower to Monsieur le Marquis!"

The marquis continued to regard him.

"And why, monsieur, do you compare me with this variety of orchid?"

"If you will tell me, Monsieur le Marquise," replied the prefect of police, "why Jean Lequex refused to say where the necklace was that he had stolen I will answer your question."

The hauteur in the marquis' voice was now distinctly audible.

"Monsieur," he said, "it was you who promised to tell me that."

"And I shall tell you," replied Jonquelle. "Jean Lequex refused to say where the necklace was for the very good reason that he did not know where it was."

M. Jonquelle looked the marquis steadily in the face.

"The agent of the Surete neglected to mention to monsieur an item or two of their discoveries—the writing on the slip of paper had been made with the left hand; and the concierge, as it happened, seeing the Marquis de Chantelle go out, leaving his door ajar, closed it.

"Ah, monsieur, we have been engaged in a bit of comedy. Pardon us if we have deceived you. It was I who conducted the investigation of your affair, disguised as Forneau, and it was the agent Forneau, disguised as Jean Lequex, who confessed to your robbery and took a mock sentence of imprisonment under an arrangement with the court. We did not find, then, the thief who opened the safe to your apartment."

The marquis regarded the prefect of police with an amazed expression, his lips parted, his eyes wide.

"Then, monsieur," he stammered, "you have discovered neither the thief nor the necklace."

"Ah, yes," replied M. Jonquelle in the modulated voice of one who bids another adieu. "We have discovered both."

He took a mass of jewels out of his waistcoat pocket and handed them to the marquis.

"I found these in the bouquet of orchids which you were sending to Mme. Zirtonsoff. May I trouble you to present them to Madame la Marquise when she shall return from America tomorrow?"

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THE MARQUIS WAS ASTONISHED WHEN FORMAN BROUGHT THE CONFUSED THIEF BEFORE HIM.

# AROUND THE CITY

**By Nannie Lancaster**

IN the squatters' section of what some ancient brown hucksters still call "the Ma'sh Mahket," an old woman was fighting the wolf with bunches of wild flowers, one guinea keat and two eggs—domineckers—last Saturday afternoon. The star feature of her stock was a single stalk of jimson weed that bore one blossom—a large white flower, veined with purplish pink, a bit wilted; price, 25 cents.

The jimson weed served old-time southern Maryland as a symbol of all that was viciously worthless. The farmer anathematized it in language that exceeded the virulence of his opinions of the decorative daisy or even the wicked loveliness of the little pink cockle that grew in his wheat. Nice ladies nearly fainted at its sinister pungency, and farm hands used it as a comparison for any man, woman or child who was so luckless as to be "no more 'count than a wufless jeemson weed"—a reputation that stuck like the cuss of melodrama.

To charge 25 cents for a noxious growth that cost no more labor than the breaking of it from some vagrant plant by the wayside, with no middleman, tax or money outlay, was, of course, absurd. Yet an ancient woman who is fighting the wolf with such futile weapons as field weeds that few care for has as much right to profiteer as the next. Anyhow, a customer came along and bought the jimson weed.

She took it home, put it in a roomy glass vase—price, 10 cents—set it on her desk and then proceeded to wonder what the dear, forever-gone oldtimers would say if they could know of the apotheosis of the outcast. All of us are foolish like that.

If you look at a jimson weed through a magnifying glass, the texture-beauty of flower and leaves thrills you like the genius of sudden melody or verse—and the hardy vigor of its stalk seems to demand vindication of the reputation saddled on it by the ignorance of those settlers at Jamestown who called it a poisonous thing, just because it made them sick to eat it. Not all things are made to be chewed; Jamestown settlers among them—so: The woman opened up a wise book and found out that instead of being the Ishmael old Maryland took it for, the jimson weed, when at its own home in South America, can be made into a powerful narcotic, used mainly for convulsions and ticticdouloureux; that when smoked it "palliates the symptoms of asthma"; that Peruvians distil it for an intoxicating beverage; and that back when the Temple of Delphes was a working institution, the seeds of the jimson (right name "Datura") used to be powdered and taken for the production of the frenzied ravings of the priests of that temple.

Which seems to show that all weeds—jimson and human—are worth the right to live if you look their virtues up in the right direction and study them under a magnifying glass that gives a clearer viewpoint than the usual critic's eyes.

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HE was a very old man—so old that he wavered as he leaned on his cane. And he was trying to tell a car-for-hire driver at the curb where he wanted to go. The driver failed to comprehend, but made the best of his ignorance by asking help of a passing man:

Excuse me, sir, but this gentleman wants to go to the island. I thought I knew every inch of the country around, but this is a new one on me."

The passing man, being unable to help, passed on. A woman who was standing by, waiting for a street bus, ventured a suggestion:

"I have heard that the southwest used to be called 'the island' in old times, when a canal divided it from this side of the city."

"That is right, madam. That is where I wanted to go."

The driver helped him inside, but protested that he ought to have some address to go by. The old man had no address:

"You can't fail to find it if you drive to the Smithsonian Institution, on the other side, and then from there you will see a row of handsome bricks with winding steps of iron—I remember them as well as if it was yesterday I lived there instead of fifty-odd years ago."

The driver still looked dubiously to the woman for help, and the old, old gentleman became somewhat impatient:

"Surely you must know of a location so conspicuous as that if only because of the notoriety that centers about one dwelling in the row—the tenant of which pulled President Jackson's nose."

The driver, still mystified, took the woman's word for it that he would find a row of houses as described, and the old, old gentleman waved a tremulous hand in parting.

He was going back to a youth so cobwebbed over with the weavings of time that the woman doubted if he would be able to pick out his own home—much less the one in which lived the tenant "who pullrd President Jackson's nose."

### A Clever Husband.

From London Opinion.

Wife—Mrs. Jones has another new hat.

Hubby—Well, if she were as attractive as you are, my dear, she wouldn't have to depend so much upon the milliner.